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Why electoral malpractices heighten risks of electoral violence

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Synopsis: Outbreaks of electoral violence trigger widespread bloodshed and destruction, destabilize fragile democracies, and derail progress in human development. To explain this phenomenon, this paper theorizes that electoral malpractices undermine feelings of regime legitimacy and mobilizes protest politics. Whether channeled through peaceful demonstrations or through outbreaks of violent conflict, however, and also how regimes respond to public disaffection, is theorized to depend upon the historical experiences of democracy and the contemporary regime in power. To develop this argument, *Part I* establishes the conceptual and theoretical framework. *Part II* describes the research design, sources of evidence, and selection of indices. *Part III* presents the results of the analysis. The main findings indicate (i) electoral violence is a widespread challenge, observed in roughly one fifth of all elections worldwide and distributed across multiple countries in many global regions, not simply a problem concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa; (ii) electoral integrity does have a significant impact by reducing outbreaks of electoral violence, as expected; (iii) protest politics, and also state repression, increase the risks of conflict. The conclusion in Part IV interprets the main findings and considers their broader implications.

One of the most remarkable developments since the mid-20th century has been the global diffusion of competitive elections. By the end of World War II, only 50 nations had multiparty elections for the lower house of parliament; today this is almost universal worldwide; only a few states, mainly Gulf State monarchies, continue to have appointed assemblies.[1] In recent decades, elections have been held in many challenging environments, including in deeply-divided societies racked by decades of conflict and among poor and illiterate populations, exemplified by contests in Afghanistan, Nepal, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Elections marking a decisive symbolic break with the past are also common as part of regime transitions, including in post-Mubarak Egypt and post-Gaddafi Libya, as well as in new-born independent nation-states, such as Timor Leste and South Sudan.

Nevertheless many multiparty contests for transitional assemblies, national legislative and executive office continue to fall well short of meeting international standards of electoral integrity. A growing body of literature, drawing upon evidence gathered from the reports of election monitors and electoral forensics, has started to document common malpractices found in democracies and elected autocracies. [2] Contests may fail at any stage of the electoral cycle due to the 'menu of manipulation'.[3] This typically includes techniques employed during the long pre-campaign phase (such as maladministration of electoral registers, partisan gerrymandering of boundaries, and restrictions on ballot access), during the campaign (such as pro-incumbency bias in financial resources and lack of a level playing field in media access), on polling day (cases of fraud, vote-buying, harassment, and ballot-stuffing), and in the immediate aftermath (exemplified by problems of complaints adjudication and annulled results).   Among all these serious problems, electoral violence, which may occur at any stage of the electoral cycle, signals perhaps the most obvious breakdown of democratic principles and cause for concern for the international community and local stakeholders. Conflict may be triggered by agents of the governing party using techniques of state repression to violate human rights, or else by losing parties and supporters refusing to accept the legitimacy of the process and outcome by mobilizing violent uprisings, inter-communal conflict, and riots, or else by tit-for-tat coercion used by leading supporters on different sides of an electoral contest.

The complex challenges of post-election violence can be illustrated by the case of Kenya, a country with an emerging economy which once appeared to be steadily on the path towards democratization and development, leading the region, but which was suddenly derailed by social instability, riots, and deadly conflict following the 2007 elections. [4] Commonwealth observers reported that the Electoral Commission's conduct largely met international standards throughout the campaign

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and polling day. After the polls closed, however, flaws in the vote tally coupled with the 72 hour delay in announcing the final results caused suspicion and mistrust.[5] The Commission eventually declared President Mwai Kibaki, leader of the Party of National Unity, as the winner, but the opposition leader, Raila Odinga, refused to accept the result, accusing the incumbent party of vote rigging. The dispute triggered months of urban riots and inter-communal conflict; the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights estimated that after this contest, more than 1,200 were killed and thousands injured, including cases of sexual violence, about 42,000 houses and many businesses were looted or destroyed, with more than 300,000 people displaced, costing the country more than one billion dollars and deterring potential investors.[6]   Prominent supporters of the two main presidential hopefuls, including former ministers, a senior civil servant, media executive, and police chief, face trial in the International Criminal Court in The Hague for alleged crimes against humanity, with charges of planning violence even before the election. The conflict was only settled eventually by a brokered power-sharing deal among the two main protagonists, but the communal violence is likely to have undermined public confidence in the electoral process and in the coalition government.

What explains this phenomenon? Previous research in comparative politics and international relations has commonly drawn upon existing theories of ethnic conflict, state repression, and civil war, and sought to extend these arguments to account for electoral violence. [7] Scholars have emphasized the most effective electoral systems and power-sharing institutions for new constitutional settlements,[8] the sequential timing of elections as part of the reconstruction process,[9] the role of international monitors in containing or exacerbating tensions,[10] and the importance of economic development and societal conditions associated with the onset or recurrence of civil wars.[11] All these explanations may provide insights which help to explain electoral violence and conflict.

[Figure 1 about here]

By contrast to the previous literature, however, this study theorizes that failure to observe international standards of electoral integrity will strengthen the risks of fatal electoral violence. The theoretical framework for the research builds upon the agenda-setting model presented schematically in Figure 1.[12] Flaws in electoral malpractices are likely to encourage widespread perceptions that elections have been fraudulent, stolen or unfair. These perceptions (whether real or imaginary) are expected to undermine public confidence in the credibility of electoral institutions and processes, to strengthen dissatisfaction with the performance of democracy, and to weaken feelings of regime legitimacy. In turn, public disaffection is predicted to encourage the propensity to engage in protest

politics, especially among supporters of losing parties. Whether this propensity is channeled through peaceful demonstrations, or else through outbreaks of fatal conflict, is theorized to depend upon the historical experience of democracy and the contemporary type of regime in power. The danger that perceptions of electoral malpractices will trigger a violent backlash is expected to be especially hazardous in contemporary autocratic states with little previous historical experience of democratic elections. In this context, where channels for peaceful protest are limited, contests are more likely to be afflicted by mass violence involving civilian casualties or fatalities, inter-communal riots, and the destruction of property through looting and arson. Moreover autocratic regimes are also expected to be more willing to use the techniques of domestic repression against their own citizens to reduce dissent and suppress protests, such as using physical coercion, intimidation, and outright violence by the security forces and gangs of armed supporters.[13] By contrast, in long-established democratic states, which have experienced an extended sequence of contests, deepening cultures of social tolerance and trust, it is expected that public disaffection with any perceived electoral malpractices is more likely to be channeled through peaceful demonstrations, mass boycotts, and lawful political strikes. Sufficient public disaffection within democratic states is expected to increase the pressures for electoral reform. In autocratic states, the theory suggests that this may also lead towards reform concessions and electoral transitions towards democracy, or else to a backlash and further repression.

To establish this argument, *Part I* discusses the conceptual and theoretical framework, the reasons why electoral integrity is expected to matter for electoral violence, and the selected propositions open to testing against empirical evidence. *Part II* describes the research design, data sources, and selection of indices. Evidence for incidents of electoral protests and electoral violence are drawn from the 3rd release of the *National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy* (NELDA) dataset. This source covers all legislative, presidential and transitional assembly direct elections held worldwide from 1945 to 2010 (N. 2,948). Electoral violence is measured by civilian fatalities immediately before, during or after the election. Protests and riots related to the electoral process or outcome are measured after the election. The research examines some of the descriptive factors associated with electoral violence, including trends over time, the geographic distribution by global region, and the type of elected body, and then uses logit regression analysis to model the cross-national time-series data. *Part III* presents the results of the analysis. The main findings indicate: (i) electoral violence is a widespread challenge, observed in roughly one fifth of all elections worldwide and distributed across multiple countries in many global regions; (ii) electoral integrity significantly reduces outbreaks of electoral violence, as expected; (iii) protest politics, and also state repression, increase the risks of conflict. The

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conclusion in *Part IV* summarizes the key findings and considers their broader theoretical and policy implications.

I: The conceptual and theoretical framework

The concept of 'electoral integrity' is gaining in popular usage as an all-encompassing way to conceptualize many related issues. Similar notions include a thicket of negative phrases such as 'electoral malpractice', 'flawed elections', 'manipulated contests', and 'electoral fraud', as well as positive terms, where elections are described as 'credible', 'acceptable', 'genuine', reflecting the 'will of the people', or the standard diplomatic rhetoric of 'free and fair'. In this study, which is part of The Electoral Integrity Project,[14] it is proposed to ground the over-arching concept of 'electoral integrity' in terms of international commitments, endorsed in a series of conventions, treaties, protocols, and guidelines, with agreed principles applying universally to all countries worldwide throughout the electoral cycle, including during the pre-electoral period, the campaign, on polling day, and its aftermath. Conversely, electoral 'malpractice' is used to refer to violations of electoral integrity, whether intentional or unintentional, legal or illegal. Flaws may arise from the failure to observe democratic rights, or lack of effective electoral governance capacity, or indeed some mix of both.

A growing body of research, by scholars and policy analysts, is starting to conceptualize the normative standards of electoral integrity,[15] to examine the techniques commonly used to manipulate electoral processes,[16] to identify the most effective policy interventions designed to prevent violations of electoral integrity, and to analyze the consequences of lack of electoral integrity for regime legitimacy, political stability, processes of democratization, and the quality of democracy.[17]

But what are the consequences of electoral malpractices for triggering peaceful protests or violent conflict in elections? The most overt electoral abuses, open to ruling and opposition parties, typically include harassing adversaries, bribing supporters or coercing opponents, vote-rigging, ballot-stuffing and finally, if losing, blatantly disregarding the people's choice.[18] But in many countries, including in long-established democracies, minor irregularities are more common, exemplified by inaccurate voter registers, maladministration of polling, petty corruption, pro-government media bias, lack of transparent campaign finance disclosure, tabulation miscounts, partisan gerrymandering, and excessively high vote-seat thresholds.

Why might lack of electoral integrity be expected to contribute towards electoral violence? The model in Figure 1 suggests that contests failing to meet international standards are likely to encourage public perceptions of electoral malpractices. Elections which are perceived to be flawed through

common malpractices (whether these beliefs are true or false) are likely to trigger public disaffection and challenges to the legitimacy of the process and outcome. The policy cycle model theorizes that the way that public disaffection is translated into peaceful or violent protest acts can be expected to differ according to each society's historical experience of democracy (and thus social learning from a long sequence of contests), as well as according to the structure of opportunities for the expression and mobilization of grievances available under democratic and autocratic types of regime.

In democratic states, public concern about the quality of elections and political disaffection is expected to mobilize peaceful popular demonstrations aiming to pressure policymakers into implementing legal and regulatory reforms designed to ameliorate electoral flaws. Liberal democracies facilitate peaceful protests through respecting rights to freedom of assembly and expression. In this environment, public concerns can be freely expressed without fear of reprisal or repression and mass demonstrations against electoral malpractices can be mobilized by losing parties, news media reports, and civic society NGOs. Long-established democracies are expected to be sufficiently resilient to overcome minor flaws in electoral integrity, such as Floridian 'hanging chads' during the 2000 American presidential contest, or overly-restrictive voter registration laws passed in many US states.[19] Similarly democracies can survive major financial scandals at Westminster or reported cases of malfeasance among the Italian Chamber of Deputies. These events have been found to deepen public cynicism with politicians and state institutions, and to encourage the propensity to engage in protest politics. [20] But nevertheless, Western democracies with experience of elections over decades or even centuries have accumulated deep reservoirs of regime legitimacy, cultures of social tolerance and trust, and adherence to democratic values. They have also developed robust institutional mechanism for legal appeals and the redress of grievances. Even if one particular election is flawed by a specific financial scandal or voting malpractice, this is not expected to undermine confidence in democratic processes as a whole, derived from repeated experience of popular contests.[21]

In turn, in democratic states with electoral accountability, officials are generally expected to often prove relatively responsive to public concerns, although studies have reported that the strength of the congruence is contingent upon multiple institutional conditions.[22] In democratic states, therefore, sustained popular protests demonstrating against the legitimacy of electoral processes and outcomes can be expected to make it more likely, although far from certain, that policymakers will seek to adopt legal or procedural institutional changes designed to allay public concern. After widespread and noisy partisan protests following the events in the Gore v. Bush race in Florida in 2000, for example, Congress

passed the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) in 2002, designed to replace mechanical punch-card voting machines, to create an Electoral Assistance Commission, and to establish minimum electoral standards.[23] Nevertheless any reforms may well fail to tackle the underlying causes of the electoral malpractices, such as the decentralized localism and partisanship of electoral administration in the United States, may misunderstand the nature of the problem, and policies may also fail to achieve their intended objectives. For example, tracking surveys since 2004 suggest that controversy surrounding new voter registration requirements implemented by many American states may have slightly weakened, not strengthened, voter confidence in the electoral process.[24] In general, evidence derived from several Anglo-American democracies suggests that changes to electoral institutions, such as the adoption of proportional representation electoral systems or legislative term limits, have little impact, at least in the short-term, upon strengthening feelings of political efficacy, satisfaction with democratic processes, and patterns of civic engagement.[25]

In autocratic states, however, elections follow a different logic, and any public protest over malpractices are likely to be met by further state repression.[26] It is widely feared that in the absence of democratic conditions, for instance where founding elections are held as part of peace-building settlements in states afflicted by decades of conflict, and lacking a cultural reservoir of public trust and tolerance accumulated over many successive democratic contests -- such as in Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo -- even minor issues of maladministration and flawed contests may heighten the dangers of instability, violence and the renewal of civil war.[27]   In autocracies, state control of the news media means that the public may not be aware of electoral malpractices and, even if aware, they will probably not feel free to express their concerns or to mobilize dissent in public.

Any popular protests which do occur may lead towards further restrictions, a process illustrated by the 2012 Russian presidential elections. Several aspects of the contest were criticized by OSCE observers, including fraudulent activities reported on polling day and lack of transparency in the vote count.[28] Once Putin's victory was announced, demonstrators immediately rallied and called for the election results to be annulled and for vote rigging to be investigated. Far from capitulating to public concerns, however, the Duma cracked down after the contest by passing new legal penalties for unsanctioned protests. Police raided the homes of several prominent activists and some independent websites went down, although this did not deter tens of thousands of citizens from engaging in anti-government demonstrations on Russia Day, demanding fresh elections.[29] The Armenian presidential

elections in 19 February 2008 also triggered a similar series of mass protests organized by the opposition. The protestors alleged widespread vote falsification and violations, claims partially supported by flawed vote counts observed by international observers from the Council of Europe.[30] Protests were eventually brutally suppressed when the government responded on 1st March by introducing a 20-day state of emergency, banning future demonstrations, and censoring the media from broadcasting political news.

Regimes prepared to violate international standards of electoral integrity through routine or minor non-coercive abuses—exemplified by practices such as ballot-stuffing, vote-buying, voter suppression through registration processes, manipulation of electoral systems, or inaccurate vote-tabulation -- are predicted to also prove more willing to use physical coercion, intimidation, and outright repression of opponents and their supporters to manipulate the outcome. From this perspective, relatively minor misdemeanors fudging electoral standards may lead in a slippery slope towards further state repression and even major crimes against humanity. In the case of the 2010 presidential elections in Cote d'Ivoire, for example, incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo was challenged by former Prime Minister, Alassane Ouattara, who had overwhelming support in much of the north. The Independent Electoral Commission released provisional results on December 2nd 2010 showing that Ouattara had won the second round of the presidential contest with 54% of the vote. The Constitutional Council immediately declared that the results were invalid, however, and the next day they declared Gbagbo the winner. Refusing to cede defeat, forces supporting Gbagbo used violent attacks to intimidate the opposition, to prevent potential defections among party supporters, and to deter external armed interventions. In this context, militant youth and other opposition forces supporting the rival candidacy of Ouattara, with limited opportunities to unseat Gbagbo through peaceful channels, used tit-for-tat violence, including reprisal killings, arson and sexual violence.[31] The U.N. estimated that the crisis caused around 1000 civilian deaths and the displacement of a million citizens within the country. In November 2011, Gbagbo was extradited to the International Criminal Court for violations of human rights, becoming the first head of state to be taken into the court's custody.

Yet repression is not the only outcome; alternatively any mass protests and popular uprisings in autocratic states may potentially trigger regime concessions, leading ultimately to more competitive multiparty contests, strengthening democratization. This process is exemplified by developments in Mexico during the 1990s, were domestic and international pressures encouraged the ruling party to implement new measures gradually cleaning up elections.[32] More recently, widespread but largely

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peaceful mass demonstrations were triggered in Mexico City by claims of vote buying and fraud, following victory for Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) candidate Enrique Peña Nieto in the 2012 presidential contest.[33] Similar protest movements were evident in the so-called 'colored revolutions' in Eastern Europe, where mass mobilization reportedly led to the reversal of the results of several fraudulent elections, such as Georgia in 2003 or Ukraine in 2004.[34] Kuntz and Thompson use several cases from Eastern Europe to argue that stolen elections in autocracies have not only been crucial for the emergence of revolutionary protests, by mobilizing ordinary citizens, strengthening the opposition, and dividing ruling elites, they have also shaped outcomes.[35] Lindberg suggests that a series of elections in Africa, even flawed contests, provide platforms for the opposition which gradually facilitates the process of democratization.[36]

II: Research design, evidence, and indices

Core propositions

To summarize the theoretical argument, lack of electoral integrity is believed to heighten public perceptions of electoral malpractices, to undermine confidence in the electoral process and feelings of regime legitimacy, and simultaneously to mobilize the propensity to engage in popular protest, especially among supporters of the losing parties. The preliminary analysis of survey evidence, presented elsewhere, provides strong empirical support for each of these propositions.[37] As a result, public reaction against perceived electoral malpractices is expected, although whether expressed through peaceful channels such as opposition boycotts, political strikes, and lawful mass demonstrations, or else by outbreaks of fatal electoral conflict, depends upon broader conditions, notably the type of regime in power and the historical experience of democracy. It therefore seems plausible that electoral malpractices can be expected to exacerbate violent protests and coercive regime reactions in more autocratic states and nations without extensive experience of these contests, while mobilizing peaceful demonstrations in more democratic states with a lengthy experience of elections. Moreover by contrast, contests which meet international standards of electoral integrity should generate fewer protests, whether violent or pacific. Thus for all these reasons, the core propositions in this paper predict that, ceteris paribus:

> H#[1]: **The standards of electoral integrity proposition:** *Electoral malpractices will strengthen the probable risks of electoral violence;*
>
> H#[2]: **The democratic learning proposition**: *Lengthy historical experience of democracy will also reduce the propensity towards electoral violence;*

> H#[3]*:* **The contemporary regime proposition**: *Autocracies will also increase the risks of electoral violence*;

Nevertheless it is possible that electoral violence springs from many other causes, so that none of these propositions turn out to prove significant (the null hypothesis). Both structural conditions and institutional arrangements are often thought to heighten the general risks of societal conflict, functioning as the 'deep-drivers' of electoral violence. [38] Structural explanations have been developed most fully in a series of studies published for more than a decade by Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler analyzing problems of armed rebellion and outbreaks of civil war. [39] The Collier-Hoeffler model categorizes the causes of violence as either 'greed' or 'grievance', emphasizing societal characteristics such as ethnic heterogeneity and polarization, low levels of development and sluggish rates of economic growth, the role of geographic locations, the size of a country and its physical terrain, the persistence of socioeconomic inequality and endemic poverty, and the role of natural resources controlled by the state. Deep-rooted socio-economic conditions, used to explain the onset, persistence, or recurrence of civil wars, may be extended to help provide insights into outbreaks of electoral violence.

Other common explanations of civil wars and political instability are provided by consociational theories of democracy, long championed by Arend Lijphart.[40] This well-known argument stresses that power-sharing constitutional arrangements dividing powers horizontally and vertically are essential to prevent violence in deeply-divided societies, including implementing proportional representation electoral systems (and thus coalition governments and inclusive multiparty parliaments), the decentralization of power to local and regional levels (through local government or federalism), and parliamentary executives (rather than winner-take-all presidential executives).[41] Power-sharing arrangements may also influence integrity, for example through the establishment of Electoral Management Bodies which are independent of the government and partisan pressures. Within the space of this limited paper, it is not possible to develop fully specified models which test the effects of the full range of structural and institutional factors on electoral violence, an issue which awaits future research. Nevertheless if structural and institutional factors drive this phenomenon, then this suggests the null hypothesis, namely:

> H#[4]: **No effects proposition**: *Electoral malpractices, the historical experience of democracy, and the contemporary type of regime in power will have no significant effects on electoral violence.*

Measuring electoral integrity and malpractices

The Electoral Integrity Project includes several instruments designed to provide comprehensive measures of the core concepts of electoral integrity and malpractices, although data collection currently remains in the field. For preliminary analysis of the available evidence, therefore, evidence testing the core propositions in this paper is derived from Susan Hyde and Nikolay Marinov's coding of *National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy* (NELDA).[42] The third release of the dataset covers all transitional assembly, legislative, and presidential national election events in independent nation-states with populations over half a million during the period from 1945 to 2010. The dataset is derived from a comprehensive list of secondary sources, including academic election handbooks, online resources, news media, and official reports, in addition to observer reports.

The measure of electoral integrity derived from the NELDA dataset combines four items: Nelda11 '*Before elections, are there significant concerns that elections will not be free and fair?*', Nelda13 '*Were opposition leaders prevented from running?*', Nelda15 '*Is there evidence that the government harassed the opposition?*' and, Nelda16 '*In the run-up to the election, were there allegations of media bias in favor of the incumbent*'.   The items do not tap into all dimensions of the broader concepts of electoral integrity and malpractices, by any means, nevertheless they do capture several important problems, especially those common in many electoral autocracies. Principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation suggested that the items formed a single dimension and reliability checks confirmed a consistent scale (Cronbach's Alpha 0.756). The items were summed and the resulting score was standardized to 100 points, for ease of comparison.

Electoral violence and electoral protest were also measured using items contained in the NELDA dataset. Thus elections were coded according to Nelda33: '*Was there significant violence involving civilian deaths immediately before, during or after the election?*'   This item was coded positively in NELDA if there were any civilian fatalities associated with the contest.   Ideally it would be useful to be able to identify the precise timing, target, and severity of any violence, although these issues are often difficult to determine with any precision; in Kenya, for example, the inter-communal violence occurred after the announcement of the official results, although it is reported to have been planned as a form of tit-for-tat retaliation by the main perpetrators well before the election.[43] Similarly reliable estimates of the exact size of the population affected or displaced by electoral violence are often unavailable, especially where the security forces and state media are controlled by the regime. To monitor incidents

of protest politics, Nelda29 asked: '*Were there riots and protests after the election?*' These were only coded if these events specifically related to the handling or outcome of the election.

Details of the construction of all variables are included in the technical appendix. The historical experience of democracy is measured by the cumulative effects over time of the standard democracy-autocracy index provided by Polity IV.   The type of regime in power is gauged by contemporary levels of the Polity IV index in the year of the election. Models also include whether the government used violent repression against demonstrators, the year of election (to monitor any significant trends), the total number of elections since 1945, and several economic and institutional control factors thought to be associated with internal conflict, as discussed fully later.

III: Distribution, analysis and results

The distribution of electoral violence

The first issue to consider, before analyzing the causes of the phenomenon, concerns the distribution and frequency of electoral violence, including trends over time, and which regions and countries are afflicted by this problem.

If we compare all types of electoral events coded in the NELDA dataset from 1945-2010, the results show that electoral violence and protests are usually fairly common. Overall almost one fifth of all elections have experienced violence (19%), while slightly fewer (14%) experienced protests or riots, and almost one in ten contests experienced both. Far from isolated events, therefore, violence is relatively widespread. Figure 2 displays trends in violence and protests every decade since the end of World War II. The results show that levels remain relatively stable from 1945 until the 1970s, after which incidents of electoral violence grew during the 1980s and the 1990s, before falling back to earlier levels during the last decade. The 1980s and 1990s experienced a substantial expansion in the use of competitive elections in Central and Eastern Europe, following the fall of the Berlin wall, as well as in many parts of the developing world. This expansion appears to have been accompanied by growing proportions of conflictual contests.

[Figure 2 about here]

Where does electoral violence occur? Much attention has focused upon the contemporary problems of conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa, highlighted by cases such as Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire, Zimbabwe, Togo, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Guinea and Equatorial Guinea.[44] In fact, however, as illustrated in Figures 3 and 4, these problems have been more common in South Asia (such as in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan), as

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well as in South East Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America. The global map illustrates the worldwide distribution where electoral violence can be observed in many developing countries, including in several states in Latin America, Asia, and Eastern Europe.   The main exception concerns long-established Western democracies in post-industrial societies, although even European countries are not wholly immune, for example Spain has experienced a series of terrorist acts by Eta targeted against elected officials.   To examine the pattern in more detail, Figure 5 ranks countries historically by levels of electoral violence since the mid-twentieth century. The results indicate that conflict at the ballot box has been experienced in most of the world's hot-spots and in places as diverse as the Solomon Islands, Angola, Uganda, Guatemala, Haiti, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Zimbabwe, Papua New Guinea, Nepal, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Colombia, Albania, Cambodia and Burma/Myanmar.   Thus electoral violence has occurred in small and large states, in countries with diverse colonial backgrounds and levels of economic development, in cultures with many different kinds of predominant faiths, and in all global regions.

[Figures 3-6 about here]

The nature of transitional assemblies makes contests exceptionally vulnerable to conflict, while the zero-sum characteristic winner-take-all presidential elections, means that these also more prone to violence than parliamentary elections, as Juan Linz has argued.[45]   Thus one third of all contests for constituent assemblies, the interim bodies charged with developing constitutions in transition processes, prove violent, by far the highest levels of any type of elected bodies (see Figure 6).

Before examining the links between electoral integrity and violence, however, is there evidence that the public perceives common problems of electoral integrity? The initial survey evidence which is available suggests that they are indeed aware, and public perceptions about flaws in electoral integrity largely coincide with expert judgments. Evidence can be compared from 13 diverse countries where data is currently available from the 6th wave of the World Values Survey (2010-12).[46] Figure 7 illustrates the proportion of citizens perceiving electoral malpractices to occur 'very' or 'fairly' often in their country's elections. As can be seen, problems which are believed to be most widespread include television news favoring the governing party (mentioned by 60% of respondents), rich people buying elections (51%), and voter bribery (51%). The problem of voters being threatened with violence at the polls is perceived as less common across these societies, but nevertheless one third of all citizens believe that this occurs very or fairly often in their own country. The perceptions of violent threats at the polls are even higher within specific countries which electoral observers note have seen recurrences of this

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problem, including Zimbabwe (54% of the public regards these threats as occurring very or fairly often), Mexico (54%), and Nigeria (66%).[47]

[Figure 7 about here]

Do electoral malpractices explain electoral violence?

We can start by describing the impact of electoral integrity on electoral violence, without any prior controls, and then develop multivariate models for the factors already discussed. Does electoral integrity help to predict levels of electoral violence? Figure 8 shows that greater electoral integrity is associated with clear and consistent reductions in both violence and protests. Thus among the elections rated most poorly by NELDA in terms of electoral malpractices, four out of ten contests experienced fatal violence, while almost as many triggered protests and riots. The proportions decline steadily until among the countries with the highest levels of electoral integrity, only one in four contests experienced violence and even fewer (6%) saw protests. When the difference in means is tested by ANOVA, the contrasts in levels of violence and protest prove to be statistically significant. From the bivariate relationships alone, it appears that flawed contests which fail to respect international standards are indeed more likely to generate conflict, although it cannot be determined from these figures alone whether conflict is due to public disaffection with stolen contests triggering popular uprisings, mass riots, and armed insurrections, or from the greater willingness of autocratic regimes to use techniques of repression against their own citizens and opponents, or from some interactive combination of both tendencies, as seems likely.

[Figure 8 about here]

The link between integrity and violence needs to be tested in cross-national time-series models with multiple controls, however, including the social conditions and institutional arrangements which could exacerbate or mitigate armed conflict and electoral violence, as discussed earlier.[48] In this study Table 2 presents the results of the binary logistic regression models where electoral violence is the dependent variable. The first model presents the core variables which we have theorized help to explain violence while the second model adds several controls which other theories suggest are important when explaining internal conflict and civil war.

The results show that electoral integrity proves to be significantly and negatively related to electoral violence; as expected, greater integrity reduces violence, a relationship which is thought to work through increasing feelings of political legitimacy and removing some causes of underlying political

grievances. Moreover this relationship remains significant even after including the battery of controls in Model 2.

Electoral protests or riots are also significantly linked to greater electoral violence, as is state repression used against demonstrators. Again as observed in diverse cases such as Kenya, Armenia, and Russia, mass demonstration triggered in protest against the process or outcome of elections, and the backlash against these by the security forces and regime supporters, are classic triggers of fatal conflict.

The potential learning effect arising from each country's length of democratic experience is less consistently supported by the analysis and it requires further examination in subsequent research. In the first model contemporary levels of democratization (measured by Polity IV) are significantly associated with greater violence, not less, although this pattern reverses once the full battery of controls is applied. This suggest a complex relationship which requires further exploration using alternative non-linear and interactive models; measures for levels of democratization can be closely correlated with indices of economic development, generating problems of multi-collinearity. The historical experience of democratization is also significant and negative in the first model; this suggests that the longer which a country has experience of democracy, the less the occurrences of electoral conflict, providing partial confirmation of the learning effect discussed earlier. This relationship becomes insignificant in the second model, however, once further controls are introduced. The inclusion of the other structural and institutional variables in model 2 also sharply restrict the number of cases under comparison, so further analysis is needed to develop alternative specifications. The results in Model 2 confirm that electoral integrity, electoral protest, and state repression continue to prove significant and consistent, however, as theorized, even with the preliminary battery of institutional and structural controls.

IV: Conclusions and implications

To summarize the central argument, in the sequential policy cycle model, illustrated in Figure 1, standards of electoral integrity are expected to generate public perceptions of electoral malpractices, and thus influence feelings of regime legitimacy and subsequent levels of protest activism. But the channels for expressing protests, and the reaction of regimes, is predicted to be conditioned by the broader context in which these problems come to light, especially the cumulative historical experience of elections in democracy and autocracy, and by opportunities for public concerns to influence the policymaking agenda through peaceful and violent channels within contemporary democratic and autocratic regimes.

The evidence compared in this study leads to several main conclusions. Firstly electoral violence has occurred fairly frequently – affecting roughly one in five national elections around the world during the last half century. This, in itself, is remarkable. The problem is often discussed today in terms of the problems of internal conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa but in fact electoral violence has been more common elsewhere in the world, especially in South Asia. Lastly, and most importantly, the quality of elections matters for violence. Where there are indications that the results are stolen, fraudulent, or simply stacked in favor of incumbents, these contests generate mass protests as well as sparking state repression against demonstrators. Case studies suggest that tit-for-tat violence can be constrained by security forces in strong states, or inter-communal conflict can spiral out of control, causing widespread bloodshed and the displacement of refugees.

What are the policy implications of this preliminary analysis? The main lessons are that the international community and local stakeholders needs to strengthen their efforts to improving the quality of electoral contests, so that they do not violate international standards. Elections which fail to do so are likely to perpetuate internal conflict, rather than helping to provide peaceful channels for the accommodation of political tensions. The United Nations is committed to strengthening human rights and elections are widely-acknowledged democratic principles. Article 21 in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares that "the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures" guaranteeing everyone "the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives."[49] These principles have been elaborated and endorsed in many subsequent international treaties and instruments, notably the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which entered into force in 1976. [50] The General Assembly underscored the United Nation's active support for representative democracy on 21 February 1991 by passing a resolution declaring that "periodic and genuine elections" are a "crucial factor in the effective enjoyment . . . of a wide range of other human rights." A series of similar resolutions have been passed periodically by the General Assembly over the years.[51] The core principles have been long endorsed by the international community, but unless the standards of elections reflect these principles, by eliminating common malpractices, contests will fail to strengthen democracy and reduce conflict.

Figure 1: Agenda-setting framework for the issue of electoral integrity
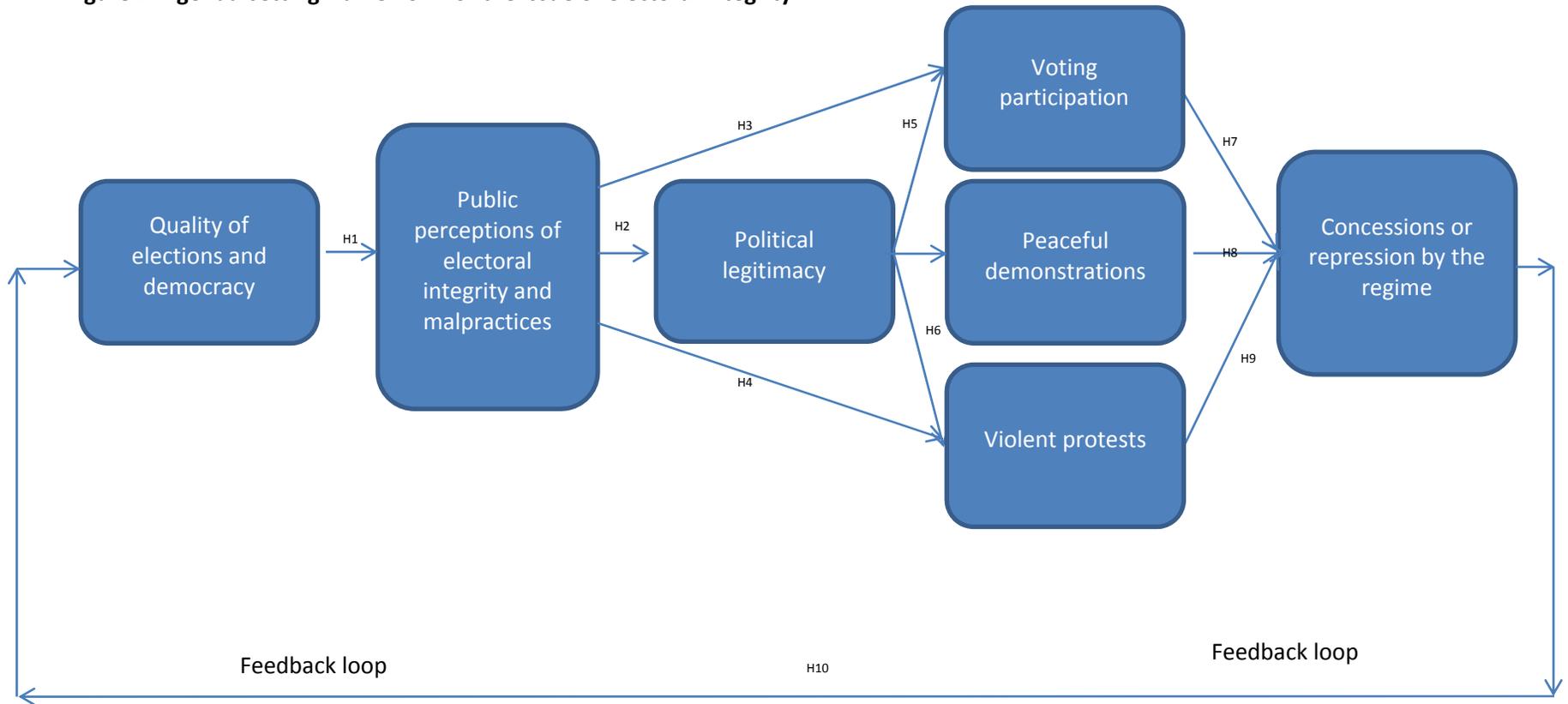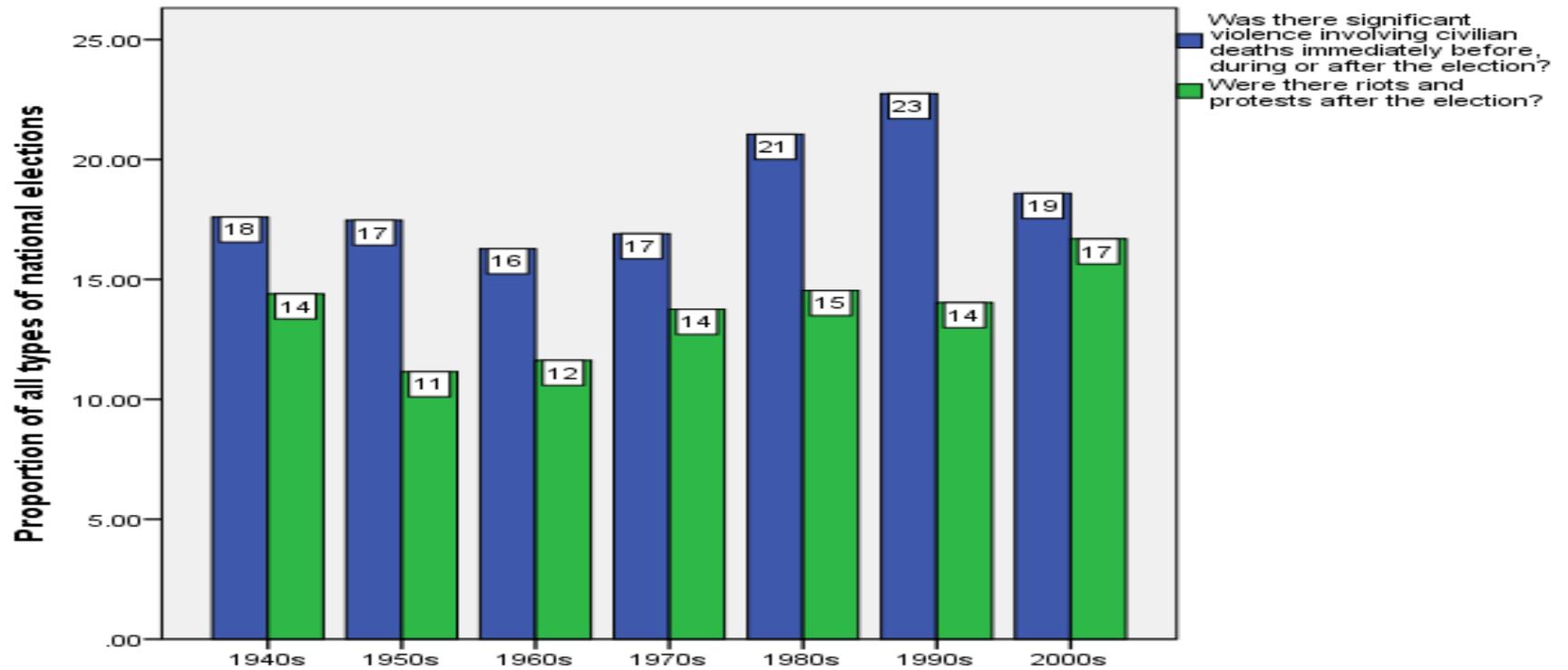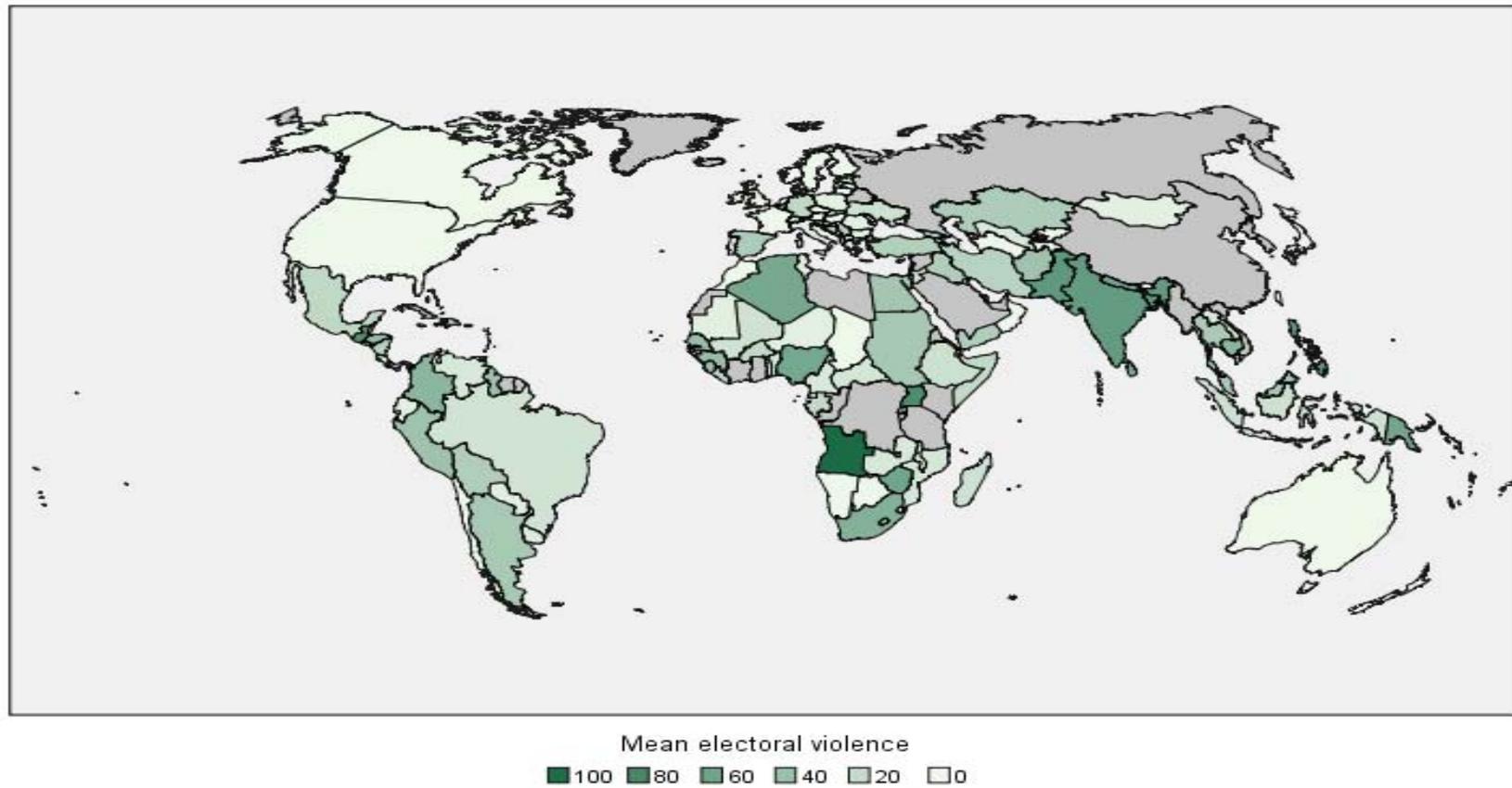
Figure 2: Trends in electoral violence, 1945-2010

Note: All types of national elections held from 1945-2010 (N.2924)

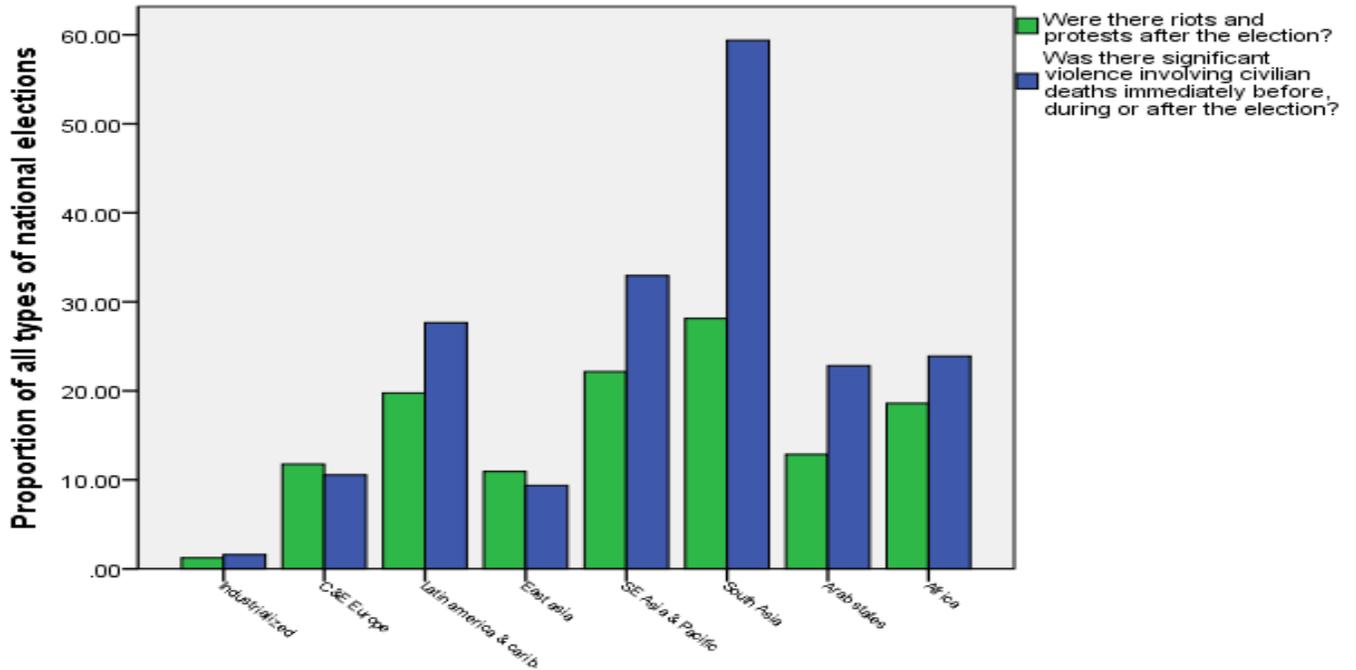Source: *National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy (NELDA)* 3rd release. Susan D. Hyde and Nikolay Marinov http://hyde.research.yale.edu/nelda/

Figure 3: Global map of electoral violence

Mean electoral violence
■100 ■80 ■60 ■40 □20 □0

Note: Proportion of all types of national elections held from 1945-2010 with electoral violence (N.2924)

Source: *National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy (NELDA)* 3rd release. Susan D. Hyde and Nikolay Marinov http://hyde.research.yale.edu/nelda/
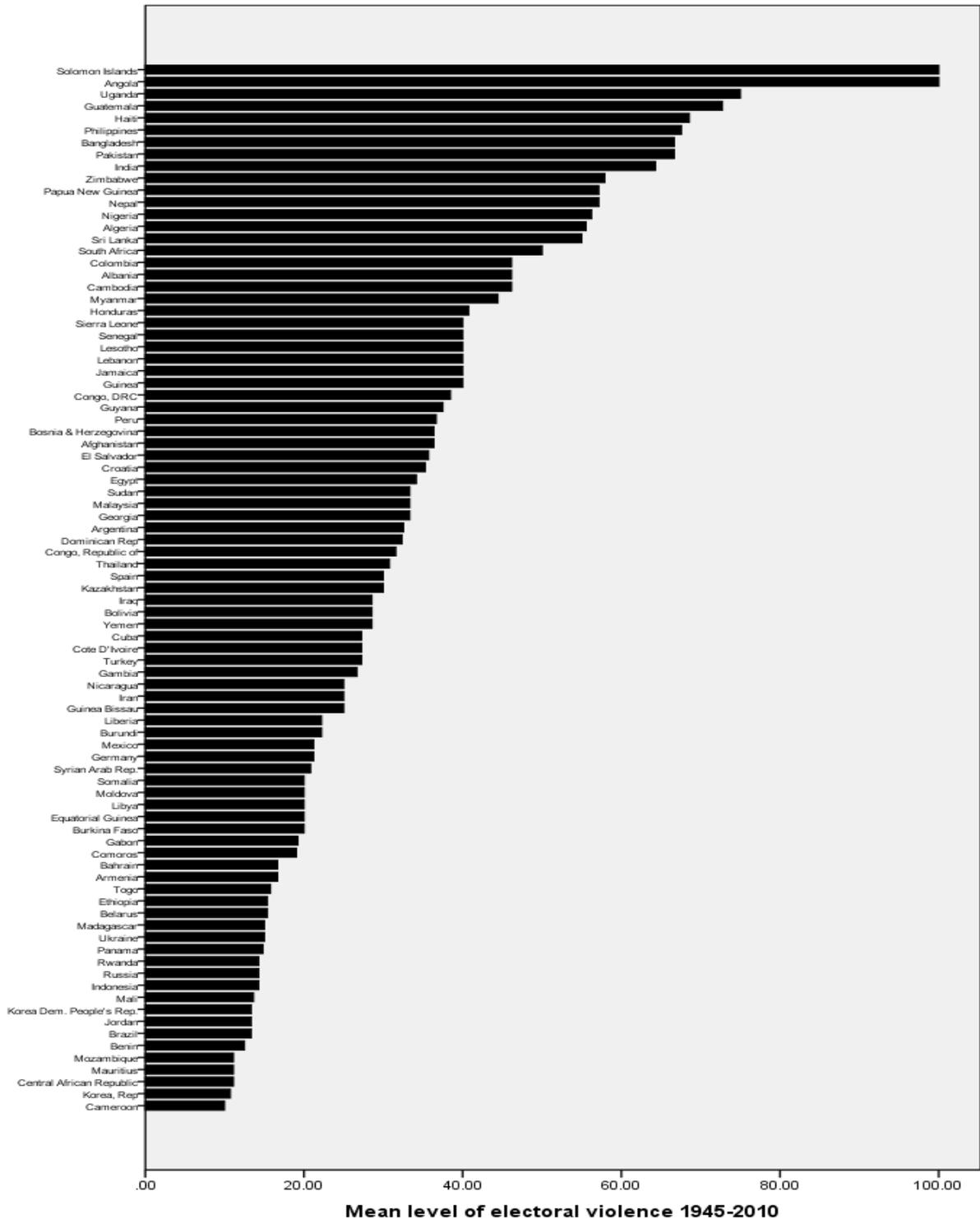
Figure 4: The regional distribution of electoral violence
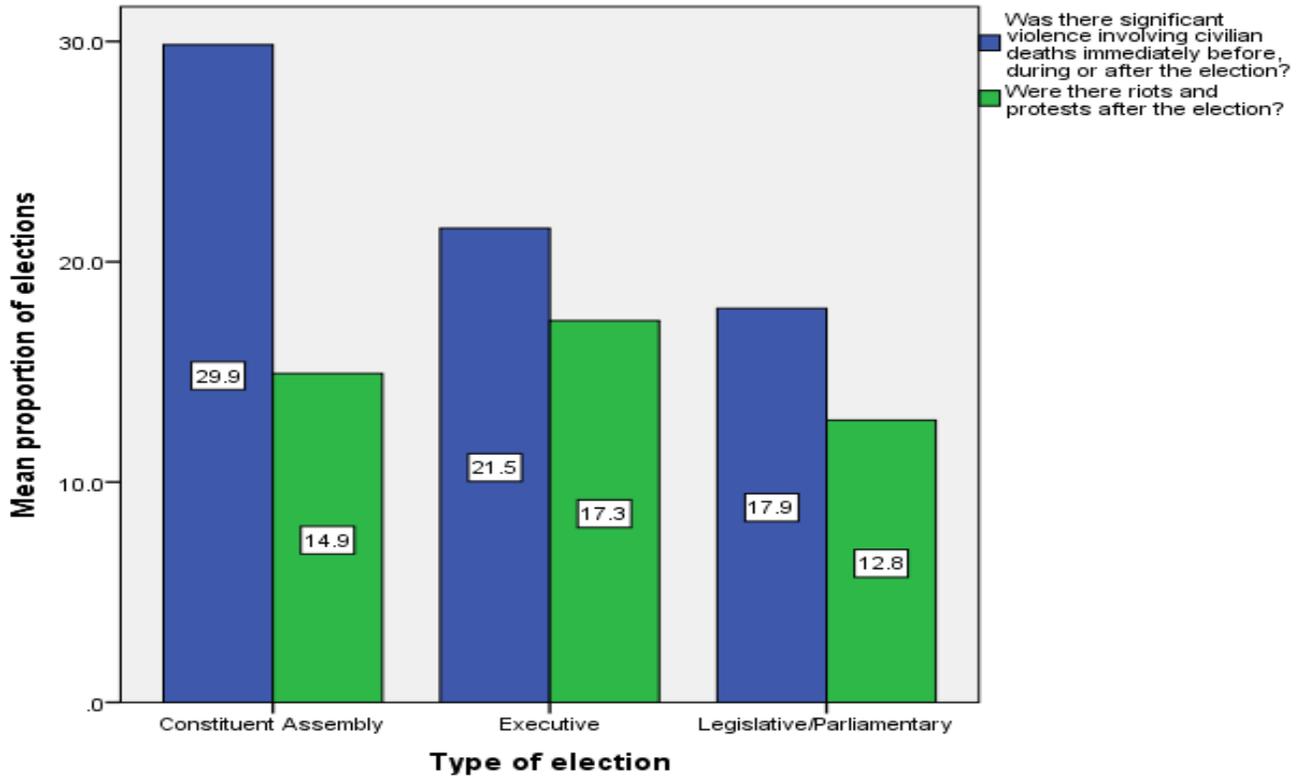

Note: All types of national elections held from 1945-2010 (N.2924)

Source: *National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy (NELDA)* 3rd release. Susan D. Hyde and Nikolay Marinov
http://hyde.research.yale.edu/nelda/

Figure 5: The national distribution of electoral violence

Note: All types of national elections held from 1945-2010 (N.2924) Source: *National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy (NELDA)* 3rd release. Susan D. Hyde and Nikolay Marinov http://hyde.research.yale.edu/nelda/

Figure 6: Types of elections with violence and protests

Note: All types of national elections held from 1945-2010 (N.2924)

Source: *National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy (NELDA)* 3rd release. Susan D. Hyde and Nikolay Marinov
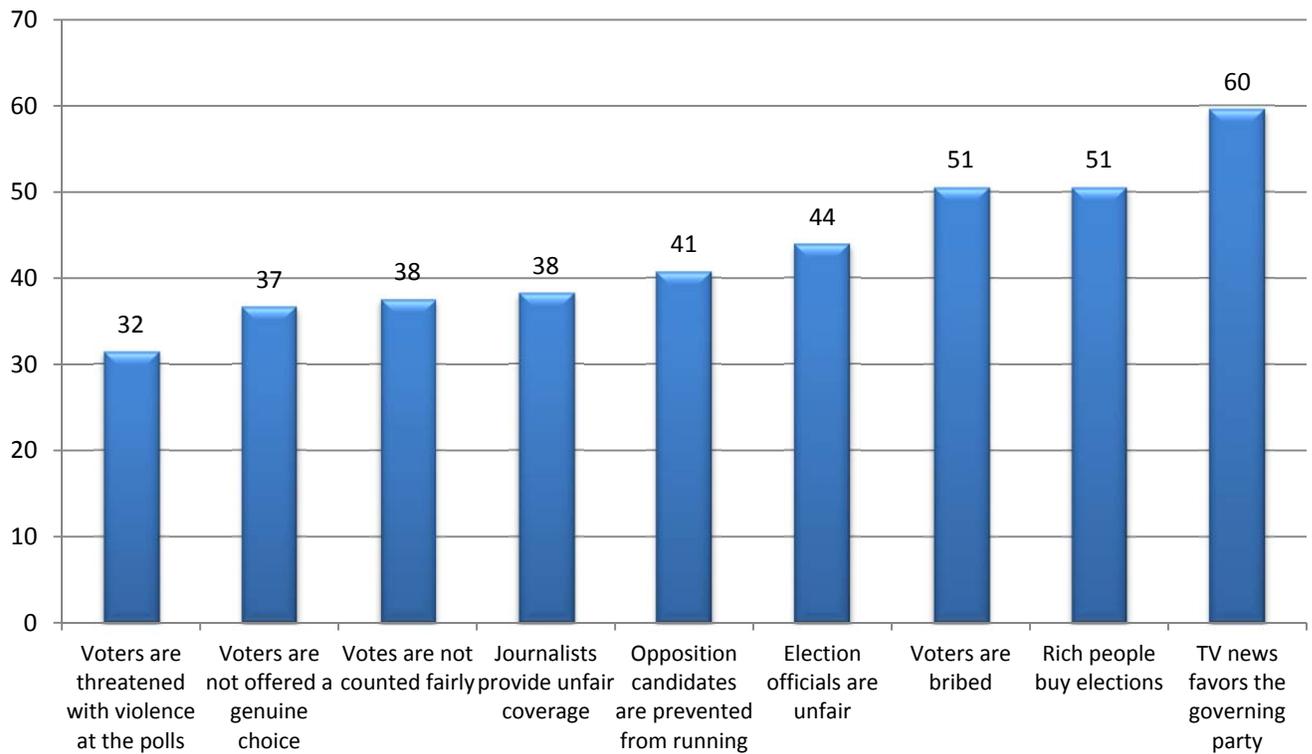http://hyde.research.yale.edu/nelda/

Figure 7: Public perceptions of electoral malpractice

Note: The proportion of respondents perceiving these problems as occurring in the country's elections 'very often' or 'fairly often'.

Source: The World Values Survey 6th wave 2010-2012

Figure 8: Electoral integrity and electoral violence and protests

Note: All types of national elections held from 1945-2010 (N.2924)

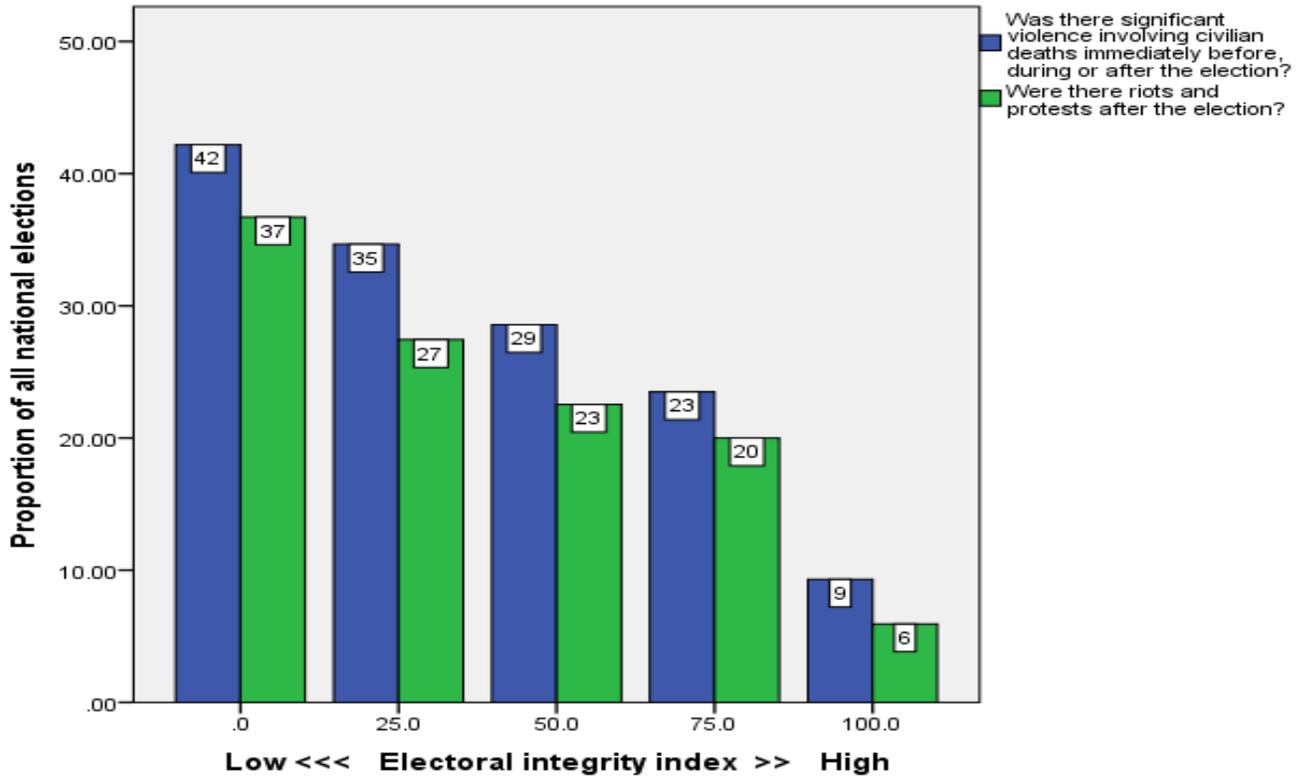**Source**: *National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy (NELDA)* 3rd release. Susan D. Hyde and Nikolay Marinov
http://hyde.research.yale.edu/nelda/

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Table 1: Regression models of electoral violence

	Model 1			Model 2		
	b	s.e.	Sig	b	s.e.	Sig
EFFECTS OF ELECTORAL INTEGRITY						
Nelda index of electoral integrity	-.014	.003	***	-.014	.005	**
Electoral protest or riot	1.217	.240	***	.982	.384	**
State repression used against demonstrators	1.77	.317	***	1.76	.577	**
Contemporary level of democratization	.014	.004	***	-.017	.007	**
Historical experience of democratization	-.001	.000	***	.000	.000	N/s
Total number of elections since 1945	.040	.009	***	.018	.022	N/s
Year	-.006	.005	N/s	.027	.012	*
CONTROLS						
Economic						
Income (GDP/Capita)				.000	.000	***
Economic growth				-.005	.015	N/s
Institutions						
Parliamentarism				.378	.195	*
Proportional representation				-.138	.159	N/s
Unitarism				-.117	.216	N/s
Geographic						
Location (Latitude)				-2.54	.925	**
Social Structure						
Linguistic fractionalization				.348	.513	N/s
Religious fractionalization				-1.22	.697	N/s
Population size				.000	.000	N/s
% Muslim				.003	.005	N/s
Nagelkerke R^2	.296			.446		
Number of observations	2974			771		
% correctly predicted	86.7			87.7		

Note: The models present the unstandardized beta coefficients, the standard errors, and the statistical significance of binary logistic regression models. The dependent variable is incidents of electoral violence. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.001$, * $p < 0.05$ N/s Not significant. For details of all the variables, see the technical appendix.

Sources: *National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy (NELDA)* 3rd release. Susan D. Hyde and Nikolay Marinov http://hyde.research.yale.edu/nelda/

Technical appendix

Source	Description and aggregation
Electoral violence	Nelda33 'Was there significant violence involving civilian deaths immediately before, during, or after the elections?' Source: *National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy (NELDA)* 3rd release. Susan D. Hyde and Nikolay Marinov http://hyde.research.yale.edu/nelda/
Peaceful electoral protest	Nelda29 'Were there riots and protests after the election?' Source: *National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy (NELDA)* 3rd release. Susan D. Hyde and Nikolay Marinov http://hyde.research.yale.edu/nelda/
State repression against demonstrators	Nelda31 If yes to above, 'Did the government use violence against demonstrators?' Source: *National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy (NELDA)* 3rd release. Susan D. Hyde and Nikolay Marinov http://hyde.research.yale.edu/nelda/
Nelda Electoral Integrity 1970-2010	Electoral integrity was measured in the Nelda dataset using four items: nelda11 '*Before elections, are there significant concerns that elections will not be free and fair?*', nelda13 '*Were opposition leaders prevented from running*', nelda15 '*Is there evidence that the government harassed the opposition?*' and, nelda16 '*In the run-up to the election, were there allegations of media bias in favor of the incumbent*'. These items were selected as a consistent scale on the basis of Principal Component Factor Analysis with Varimax rotation. The four items were combined and then the score was reversed and standardized. Source: *National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy* (NELDA) 3rd release. Susan D. Hyde and Nikolay Marinov http://hyde.research.yale.edu/nelda/
WVS 2011-2012 Perception of Electoral Integrity and electoral malpractice	*Perceptions of electoral integrity* and *electoral malpractice* are monitored using a 9-item battery of questions where responses to each item are coded on a scale from 1 'Very often' to 4 'Not at all often'. "In your view, how often do the following things occur in this country's elections? *Electoral integrity*: "1. Votes are counted fairly; 2. Journalists provide fair coverage of elections; 3. Election officials are fair; 4. Voters are offered a genuine choice at the ballot box." *Electoral malpractice:* "1. Opposition candidates are prevented from running; 2. TV news favors the governing party; 3. Voters are bribed; 4. Rich people buy elections; 5. Voters are threatened with violence at the polls;" Items are aggregated for each scale and then each score is standardized to 100 points. Source: 6th wave of the World Values Survey, 2010-2012. For details, see www.worldvaluessurvey.org
Contemporary level of democratization	The Polity IV index of autocracy-democracy in the year of the election. The 20-point index is standardized to generate a 100-point scale. Source: *Polity IV*.
Historical experience of democratization	The cumulative Polity IV index of autocracy-democracy since 1945. Source: *Polity IV*.
CONTROLS	
Economic growth	Annual percentage growth rate of per capita GDP at market prices based on constant local prices. Source: *Penn World Tables.*
Economic development	Per capita GDP at market prices based on constant local prices. Source: *Penn World Tables.*
Internal armed	'Internal armed conflict' is defined as that which occurs between the government of a state

conflict	and one or more internal opposition group(s) without intervention from other states. The UCDP measure is coded one a 4-point ordinal scale depending upon the incidence and magnitude of conflict (depending upon the number of battle-related deaths): (0) no interstate conflict; (1) minor interstate armed conflict; (2) Interstate intermediate armed conflict; and (4) Interstate war. The measure indicates the incidence and severity of internal armed. Source: UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset V4.0 1946-2007
Geographic latitude	The absolute value of the latitude from the equator of the capital city, divided by 90 (to take values between 0 and 1). Source: La Porta, Lopez-de-Silanes, Shleifer and Vishny 1999
Ethno-linguistic fractionalization	The share of languages spoken as 'mother tongues' in each country, generally derived from national census data, as reported in the Encyclopedia Britannica 2001. The fractionalization index is computed as one minus the Herfindahl index of ethnolinguistic group share, reflecting the probability that two randomly selected individuals from a population belonged to different groups. Sources: Alesina, Devleeschauwer, Easterly, Kurlat and Wacziarg 2003.
Religious fractionalization	The share of the population adhering to different religions in each country, as reported in the Encyclopedia Britannica 2001 and related sources. The fractionalization index is computed as one minus the Herfindahl index of ethnoreligious group share, reflecting the probability that two randomly selected individuals from a population belonged to different groups. Sources: Alesina, Devleeschauwer, Easterly, Kurlat and Wacziarg 2003.
Population size	The estimates total population per state (thousands). Sources: Penn World Tables.
Electoral systems	The type of electoral systems used for the lower house of the national parliament. Coded (1) majoritarian or preferential vote, (2) mixed member majority or block vote, (3) Closed list PR. Source. Geering, Thacker and Moreno www.bu.edu/sthacker/data.htm
Unitarism	Average of non-federalism and non-bicameralism. Source. Geering, Thacker and Moreno www.bu.edu/sthacker/data.htm
Parliamentarism	Coded (0) Presidential, (1) Semi-presidential and (2) Parliamentary Source. Geering, Thacker and Moreno www.bu.edu/sthacker/data.htm

For details, see Jan Teorell, Marcus Samanni, Nicholas Charron, Soren Holmberg and Bo Rothstein. *The Quality of Government Dataset Codebook* University of Gothenburg: The Quality of Government Institute. www.qog.pol.gu.se

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